THE

# ROSCIAD.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING AND SIX-PENCE.]

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# ROSCIAD.

BY

## C. CHURCHILL.

UNKNOWING, AND UNKNOWN, THE HARDY MUSE
BOLDLY DEFIES ALL MEAN AND PARTIAL VIEWS,
WITH HONEST FREEDOM PLAYS THE CRITIC'S PART,
AND PRAISES, AS SHE CENSURES, FROM THE HEART.

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BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

THE

# ROSCIAD.

ROSCIUS deceas'd, each high aſpiring play'r
Puſh'd all his int'reſt for the vacant Chair.
The buſkin'd heroes of the mimic ſtage
No longer whine in love, and rant in rage;
The monarch quits his throne, and condeſcends
Humbly to court the favour of his friends;
For pity's ſake tells undeſerv'd miſhaps,
And their applauſe to gain, recounts his claps.
Thus the victorious chiefs of ancient Rome,
To win the mob, a ſuppliant's form aſſume;
In pompous ſtrain fight o'er th' extinguiſh'd war,
And ſhew where honour bled in ev'ry ſcar.

BUT though bare merit might in Rome appear,
'Tis not the ſtrongeſt plea for favour here;

We form our judgment in another way;
And they will beſt ſucceed, who beſt can pay:
Thoſe who would gain the votes of Britiſh tribes,
Muſt add to force of merit, force of bribes.

What can an actor give? in ev'ry age
Caſh hath been rudely baniſh'd from the ſtage;
Monarchs themſelves to grief of ev'ry play'r,
Appear as often as their image there:
They can't, like candidate for other ſeat,
Pour ſeas of wine, and mountains raiſe of meat.
Wine! they could bribe you with the world as ſoon;
And of roaſt beef, they only know the tune.
But what they have they give; could Clive do more,
Though for one million he had brought home four?

S----r keeps open houſe at Southwark fair,
And hopes the friends of humour will be there.
In Smithfield Y---s prepares the rival treat,
For thoſe who laughter love inſtead of meat.
F--te, at Old Houſe, for even F--te will be
In ſelf-conceit an actor) bribes with tea;
Which W--k--s-n at ſecond hand receives,
And at the New pours water on the leaves.

The Town divided, each runs ſev'ral ways,
As paſſion, humour, int'reſt, party ſways.

Things of no moment, colour of the hair,
Shape of a leg, complexion brown or fair;
A dreſs well choſen, or a patch miſplac'd,
Conciliate favour, or create diſtaſte.

From galleries loud peals of laughter roll,
And thunder Shuter's praiſes,---he's ſo droll.
Embox'd the ladies muſt have ſomething ſmart,
Palmer! Oh! Palmer tops the janty part.
Seated in pit, the dwarf, with aching eyes
Looks up, and vows that Barry's out of ſize;
Whilſt to ſix feet the ſtripling vig'rous grown,
Declares that Garrick is another Coan.

When place of Judgment is by Whim ſupply'd,
And our opinions have their riſe in Pride;
When, in diſcourſing on each mimic elf,
We praiſe and cenſure with an eye to ſelf;
All muſt find friends; and A-km-n bids as fair,
In ſuch a court, as Garrick for the Chair.

At length agreed, all ſquabbles to decide,
By ſome one judge the cauſe was to be try'd;
But this their ſquabbles did afreſh renew,
Who ſhould be judge in ſuch a trial:---Who?

For J-hns-n ſome, but J-hns-n, it was fear'd,
Would be too grave; and St-ne too looſe appear'd:

Some call'd for M-RP-Y, but that ſound ſoon dy'd,
And Deſart Iſland rang on ev'ry ſide:
Others for F-A-K-L-N voted, but 'twas known,
He ſicken'd at all triumphs but his own:
For COLMAN many, but the peviſh tongue
Of prudent Age found out that he was Young.

WITH ſleek appearance, and with ambling pace,
And, type of vacant head, with vacant face,
The Proteus H-LL put in his modeſt plea,---
"Let Favour ſpeak for others, Worth for me.---"
For who, like him, his various pow'rs could call
Into ſo many ſhapes, and ſhine in all?
Who could ſo nobly grace the motley liſt,
Actor, Inſpector, Doctor, Botaniſt?
Knows any one ſo well,---ſure no one knows,---
At once to play, preſcribe, compound, compoſe?
Who can?--But WOODWARD came,--H-LL ſlipp'd away,
Melting like ghoſts before the riſing day.

COLD-BLOODED critics, by enervate fires
Scarce hammer'd out, when Nature's feeble fires
Glimmer'd their laſt; whoſe ſluggiſh blood, half froze,
Creeps lab'ring through the veins; whoſe heart ne'er glows
With fancy-kindled heat---A ſervile race,
Who, in mere want of fault, all merit place;

Who

Who blind obedience pay to ancient ſchools,
Bigots to Greece, and ſlaves to muſty rules;
With ſolemn conſequence declar'd that none
Could judge that cauſe but SOPHOCLES alone.
Dupes to their fancied excellence, the crowd
Obſequious to the ſacred dictate bow'd.

WHEN, from amidſt the throng a youth ſtood forth,
Unknown his perſon, not unknown his worth;
His looks beſpoke applauſe; alone he ſtood,
Alone he ſtemm'd the mighty critic flood.
He talk'd of ancients as the man became
Who priz'd our own, but envied not their fame;
With noble rev'rence ſpoke of Greece and Rome,
And ſcorn'd to tear the laurel from the tomb.

" BUT more than juſt to other countries grown,
" Muſt we turn baſe apoſtates to our own?
" Where do theſe words of Greece and Rome excel,
" That England may not pleaſe the ear as well?
" What mighty magic's in the place or air,
" That all perfection needs muſt centre there;
" In ſtates, let ſtrangers blindly be prefer'd;
" In ſtate of letters, merit ſhould be heard.
" Genius is of no country, her pure ray
" Spreads all abroad as gen'ral as the day.

" Foe to reſtraint, from place to place ſhe flies,
" And may hereafter e'en in Holland riſe.
" May not, to give a pleaſing fancy ſcope,
" And chear a patriot heart with patriot hope;
" May not ſome great extenſive genius raiſe
" The name of Britain 'bove Athenian praiſe;
" And, whilſt brave thirſt of fame his boſom warms,
" Make England great in letters as in arms?
" There may--there hath--and SHAKESPEAR's muſe aſpires
" Beyond the reach of Greece; with native fires,
" Mounting aloft he wings his daring flight,
" Whilſt SOPHOCLES below ſtands trembling at his height."

WHY ſhould we then abroad for judges roam,
When abler judges we may find at home?
Happy in tragic and in comic pow'rs,
Have we not SHAKESPEAR?---Is not JOHNSON ours?
For them, your nat'ral judges, Britons vote;
They'll judge like Britons, who like Britons wrote.

HE ſaid, and conquer'd.---Senſe reſum'd her ſway,
And diſappointed pedants ſtalk'd away.
SHAKESPEAR and JOHNSON, with deſerv'd applauſe,
Joint-judges were ordain'd to try the cauſe.
Mean-time the ſtranger ev'ry voice employ'd,
To aſk or tell his name.---" Who is it?"---LLOYD.

THUS

THUS, when the aged friends of JOB ſtood mute,
And tamely prudent gave up the diſpute,
ELIHU, with the decent warmth of youth,
Boldly ſtood forth, the advocate of Truth;
Confuted Falſhood, and diſabled Pride,
Whilſt baffled Age ſtood ſnarling at his ſide.

THE day of tryal's fix'd, nor any fear
Leſt day of tryal ſhould be put off here.
Cauſes but ſeldom for delay can call
In courts where forms are few, fees none at all.

THE morning came, nor find I that the Sun,
As he on other great events hath done,
Put on a brighter robe than what he wore
To go his journey in the day before.

FULL in the centre of a ſpacious plain,
On plan entirely new, where nothing vain,
Nothing magnificent appear'd, but Art,
With decent modeſty perform'd her part,
Roſe a tribunal: from no other court
It borrow'd ornament, or ſought ſupport:
No juries here were pack'd to kill or clear,
No bribes were taken, nor oaths broken here:
No gownſmen, partial to a client's cauſe,
To their own purpoſe tun'd the pliant laws.

Each judge was true and ſteady to his truſt,
As MANSFIELD wiſe, and as old FOSTER juſt.

IN the firſt ſeat, in robe of various dyes,
A noble wildneſs flaſhing from his eyes,
Sat SHAKESPEAR.---In one hand a wand he bore,
For mighty wonders fam'd in days of yore;
The other held a globe, which to his will
Obedient turn'd, and own'd the maſter's ſkill:
Things of the nobleſt kind his genius drew,
And look'd through Nature at a ſingle view:
A looſe he gave to his unbounded ſoul,
And taught new land's to riſe, new ſeas to roll;
Call'd into being ſcenes unknown before,
And, paſſing Nature's bounds, was ſomething more.

NEXT JOHNSON ſat,---in ancient learning train'd,
His rigid judgment Fancy's flights reſtrain'd,
Correctly prun'd each wild luxuriant thought,
Mark'd out her courſe, nor ſpar'd a glorious fault.
The book of man he read with niceſt art,
And ranſack'd all the ſecrets of the heart;
Exerted Penetration's utmoſt force,
And trac'd each paſſion to its proper ſource.
Then, ſtrongly mark'd, in livelieſt colours drew,
And brought each foible forth to public view.

The

The coxcomb felt a laſh in ev'ry word,
And fools hung out their brother fools deterr'd.
His comic humour kept the world in awe,
And Laughter frighten'd Folly more than Law.

But, hark!---The trumpet ſounds, the crowd gives way,
And the proceſſion comes in juſt array.

Now ſhould I, in ſome ſweet poetic line,
Offer up incenſe at Apollo's ſhrine;
Invoke the Muſe to quit her calm abode,
And waken Mem'ry with a ſleeping ode.
For how ſhould mortal man in mortal verſe,
Their titles, merits, or their names rehearſe?
But give, kind Dullneſs, Memory and Rhime,
We'll put off Genius till another time.

First, Order came,---with ſolemn ſtep, and ſlow,
In meaſur'd time his feet were taught to go.
Behind, from time to time, he caſt his eye,
Leſt This ſhould quit his place, That ſtep awry:
Appearances to ſave, his only care;
So things ſeem right, no matter what they are.
In him his parents ſaw themſelves renew'd,
Begotten by Sir Critic on Saint Prude.

THEN came drum, trumpet, hautboy, fiddle, flute;
Next, ſnuffer, ſweeper, ſhifter, ſoldier, mute:
Legions of angels all in white advance;
Furies, all fire, come forward in a dance:
Pantomine figures then are brought to view,
Fools, hand in hand with fools, go two by two.
Next came the treaſurer of either houſe;
One with full purſe, t'other with not a ſous.

BEHIND a group of figures awe create,
Set off with all th' impertinence of ſtate;
By lace and feather conſecrate to fame,
Expletive kings and queens without a name.

HERE H-V--D, all ſerene, in the ſame ſtrains,
Loves, hates, and rages, triumphs and complains;
His eaſy vacant face proclaim'd an heart
Which could not feel emotions, nor impart.
With him came mighty D---s:---On my life,
That D---s hath a very pretty wife!---
Stateſman all over!---In plots famous grown!---
He mouths a ſentence, as---curs mouth a bone.

NEXT, H-LL-ND came.---With truly tragic ſtalk,
He creeps, he flies.---An heroe ſhould not walk.
As if with Heav'n he warr'd, his eager eyes
Planted their batteries againſt the ſkies:

Attitude, action, air, pauſe, ſtart, ſigh, groan,
He borrow'd, and made uſe of as his own.
By fortune thrown on any other ſtage,
He might, perhaps, have pleas'd an eaſy age;
But now appears a copy, and no more,
Of ſomething better we have ſeen before.
The actor who would build a ſolid fame,
Muſt Imitation's ſervile arts diſclaim;
Act from himſelf, on his own bottom ſtand.---
I hate e'en GARRICK thus at ſecond hand.

BEHIND came K--G.---Bred up in modeſt lore,
Baſhful and young, he ſought Hibernia's ſhore;
Hibernia, fam'd, 'bove ev'ry other grace,
For matchleſs intrepidity of face.
From her his features caught the gen'rous flame,
And bid defiance to all ſenſe of ſhame:
Tutor'd by her all rivals to ſurpaſs,
'Mongſt DRURY's ſons he comes, and ſhines in BRASS.

Lo Y---s!---Without the leaſt fineſſe of art
He gets applauſe!---I wiſh he'd get his part.
When hot impatience is in full career,
How vilely "Hark'e! Hark'e!" grates the ear?
When active Fancy from the brain is ſent,
And ſtands on tip-toe for ſome wiſh'd event,

I hate

I hate thoſe careleſs blunders which recall
Suſpended ſenſe, and prove it fiction all.

W--D---D, endow'd with various pow'rs of face,
Great maſter in the ſcience of Grimace,
From Ireland ventures, fav'rite of the Town,
Lur'd by the pleaſing proſpect of Renown.
His wit and Humour in Diſtortion lye,
And all his merit enters at the eye.
We laugh, we clap, --- but, on Reflection's birth,
We wonder at ourſelves, and curſe our mirth.
His walk of parts he fatally miſplac'd,
And Inclination fondly took for Taſte.
Hence hath the Town ſo often ſeen diſplay'd
Beau in burleſque, high-life in maſquerade.
Merit he had, ſome merit in his way,
But ſeldom found out in what part it lay.
In Bobadil, indeed, ſuch praiſe he bore,
Such worthy praiſe, that Kitely ſcarce had more.

By turns transform'd into all kinds of ſhapes,
Conſtant to none, F--TE laughs, cries, ſtruts, and ſcrapes:
Now in the centre, now in van or rear,
The Proteus ſhifts, Bawd, Parſon, Auctioneer.
His ſtrokes of humour, and his burſts of ſport,
Are all contain'd in this one word, Diſtort.

Doth

Doth a man ſtutter, look a-ſquint, or halt;
Mimics draw humour out of Nature's fault:
With perſonal defects their mirth adorn,
And hang misfortunes out to public ſcorn.
E'en I, whom Nature caſt in hideous mould,
Whom having made ſhe trembled to behold,
Beneath the load of mimicry may groan,
And find, that Nature's errors are my own.

SHADOWS behind of F--TE and W--D---D came;
W--K--R-N this, OB-I-N was that name.
Strange to relate, but wonderfully true,
That even ſhadows have their ſhadows too!
With not a ſingle comic pow'r endued,
The firſt, a mere mere mimic's mimic ſtood.
The laſt, by Nature form'd to pleaſe, who ſhews,
In JOHNSON's Stephen, which way Genius grows;
Self quite put off, affects, with too much art,
To put on WOODWARD in each mangled part;
Adopts his ſhrug, his wink, his ſtare; nay more,
His voice, and croaks; for WOODWARD croak'd before.
Thus the dull copyer ſimple grace neglects,
And reſts his Imitation in---Defects.

ARMS croſs'd, brows bent, eyes fix'd, feet marching ſlow,
A band of malcontents with ſpleen o'erflow;

Wrapp'd in Conceit's impenetrable fog,
Which Pride, like Phœbus, draws from ev'ry bog;
They curse the Managers, and curse the Town,
Whose partial favour keeps such merit down.

But if some man, more hardy than the rest,
Should dare attack these gnatlings in their nest;
At once they rise with impotence of rage,
Whet their small stings, and buzz about the stage.
"'Tis breach of privilege!---Shall any dare
"To arm Satyric Truth against a play'r?
"Prescriptive rights we plead, time out of mind;
"Actors, unlash'd themselves, may lash mankind."

What! shall Opinion then, of Nature free
And lib'ral as the vagrant air, agree
To rust in chains like these, impos'd by Things
Which, less than nothing, ape the pride of kings?
No,---though half-poets with half-players join
To curse the freedom of each honest line;
Though Rage and Malice dim their faded cheek,
What the Muse freely thinks, she'll freely speak;
With just disdain of ev'ry paltry sneer,
Stranger alike to Flattery and Fear,

In

In purpoſe fix'd, and to herſelf a rule,
Public Contempt ſhall wait the Public Fool.

A-ST-N would always gliſten in French ſilks,
A-KM-N would NORRIS be, and P-CK-R WILKS.
For who, like A-KM-N can with humour pleaſe?
Who can, like P-CK-R, charm with ſprightly eaſe?
Higher than all the reſt, ſee BR-NS-Y ſtrut:
A mighty Gulliver in Lilliput!
Ludicrous Nature! which at once could ſhew
A man ſo very High, ſo very Low.

IF I forget thee, BL-K-S, or if I ſay
Aught hurtful, may I never ſee thee play.
Let critics, with a ſupercilious air,
Decry thy various merit, and declare,
Frenchman is ſtill at top;---but ſcorn that rage
Which, in attacking thee, attacks the age.
French follies, univerſally embrac'd,
At once provoke our mirth, and form our taſte.

LONG from a nation, ever hardly us'd,
At random cenſur'd, wantonly abus'd,
Have Britons drawn their ſport; with partial view
Form'd gen'ral notions from the raſcal few;

Condemn'd

Condemn'd a people, as for vices known,
Which from their country baniſh'd ſeek our own.
At length, howe'er, the ſlaviſh chain is broke,
And Senſe, awaken'd ſcorns her ancient yoke:
Taught by thee, MOODY, we now learn to raiſe
Mirth from their foibles; from their virtues, praiſe.

FROM C-v-nt-G-rd-n crowds promiſcuous go,
Whom the Muſe knows not, nor deſires to know.
Vet'rans they ſeem'd, but knew of arms no more
Than if, till that time, arms they never bore:
Like Weſtminſter militia, train'd to fight,
They ſcarcely knew the left hand from the right.
Aſham'd among ſuch troops to ſhew the head,
Their chiefs were ſcatter'd, and their heroes fled.

S--RKS at his glaſs ſat comfortably down
To ſep'rate frown from ſmile, and ſmile from frown.
SM--H the genteel, the airy, and the ſmart,
SM--H was juſt gone to ſchool to ſay his part.
R-SS (a misfortune which we often meet)
Was faſt aſleep at dear STATIRA's feet;
STATIRA, with her heroe to agree,
Stood on her feet as faſt aſleep as he.
M--KL-N, who largely deals in half-form'd ſounds,
Who wantonly tranſgreſſes Nature's bounds,

Eager

Eager to touch up ſome new comic ſcene,
Lay happily conceal'd behind a ſcreen.
Sh-t-r, who never car'd a ſingle pin
Whether he left out nonſenſe or put in,
Who aim'd at wit, though, levell'd in the dark,
The random arrow ſeldom hit the mark,
At Iſlington, all by the placid ſtream
Where city ſwains in lap of Dullneſs dream,
Where, quiet as her ſtrains their ſtrains do flow,
That all the patron by the bards may know;
Secret as night, with R-lt's experienc'd aid,
The plan of future operations laid,
Projected ſchemes the ſummer months to chear,
And ſpin out happy Folly through the year.

But think not, though theſe daſtard chiefs are fled,
That C-v-nt-G-rd-n troops ſhall want an head:
Harlequin comes their chief! --- See, from afar,
The heroe ſeated in fantaſtic car!
Wedded to Novelty, his only arms
Are wooden ſwords, wands, taliſmans, and charms.
On one ſide Folly ſits, by ſome call'd Fun,
And on the other, his arch-patron Lun.
Behind, for Liberty a-thirſt in vain,
Senſe, helpleſs captive, drags the galling chain.

Six rude miſhapen beaſts the chariot draw,
Whom Reaſon loaths, and Nature never ſaw,
Monſters, with tails of ice, and heads of fire;
Gorgons, and hydras, and chymæras dire.
Each was beſtrode by full as monſtrous wight,
Giant, Dwarf, Genius, Elf, Hermaphrodite.
The Town, as uſual, met him in full cry:
The Town, as uſual, knew no reaſon why.
But Faſhion ſo directs, and Moderns raiſe,
On Faſhion's mould'ring baſe, their tranſient praiſe.

Next, to the field a band of females draw
Their Force; for Britain owns no Salique Law:
Juſt to their worth, we female rights admit,
Nor bar their claim to Empire or to Wit.

First, giggling, plotting chamber-maids arrive,
Hoydens and Romps, led on by Gen'ral Clive.
In ſpight of outward blemiſhes ſhe ſhone
For Humour fam'd, and Humour all her own.
Eaſy, as if at home, the ſtage ſhe trod,
Nor ſought the Critic's praiſe, nor fear'd his rod.
Original in ſpirit and in eaſe,
She pleas'd by hiding all attempts to pleaſe.
No comic actreſs ever yet could raiſe,
On Humour's baſe, more merit or more praiſe.

WITH all the native vigour of ſixteen,
Among the merry troop conſpicuous ſeen,
See lively POPE advance in jig and trip,
Corinna, Cherry, Honeycomb, and Snip.
Not without Art, but yet to Nature true,
She charms the Town with Humour juſt, yet new.
Chear'd by her promiſe, we the leſs deplore
The fatal time when CLIVE ſhall be no more.

MIGHT Figure give a title unto Fame,
What rival ſhould with Y-T-S diſpute her claim;
But Juſtice may not partial trophies raiſe,
Nor ſink the Actreſs in the Woman's praiſe.
Still, hand in hand, her words and actions go,
And the heart feels more than the features ſhew;
For through the regions of that beauteous face,
We no variety of paſſions trace;
Dead to the ſoft emotions of the heart,
No kindred ſoftneſs can thoſe eyes impart;
The brow, ſtill fix'd in Sorrow's gloomy frame,
Void of diſtinction, marks all parts the ſame.

WHAT's a fine perſon, or a beauteous face,
Unleſs Deportment gives it decent grace?
Bleſs'd with all other requiſites to pleaſe,
Some want the ſtriking elegance of Eaſe;

The curious eye their aukward movement tires;
They ſeem like puppets led about by wires.
Others, like ſtatues, in one poſture ſtill,
Give great ideas of the workman's ſkill;
Wond'ring, his art we praiſe the more we view,
And only grieve he gave not motion too.
Weak of themſelves are what we beauties call,
It is the Manner which gives ſtrength to all.
This teaches ev'ry beauty to unite,
And brings them forward in the nobleſt light.
Happy in this, behold, amidſt the throng,
With tranſient gleam of grace, H---T ſweeps along.

FORM'D for the tragic ſcene, to grace the ſtage,
With rival excellence of Love and Rage,
Miſtreſs of each ſoft art, with matchleſs ſkill
To turn and wind the paſſions as ſhe will;
To melt the heart with ſympathetic woe,
Awake the ſigh, and teach the tear to flow;
To put on Frenzy's wild diſtracted glare,
And freeze the ſoul with horror and deſpair;
With juſt deſert enroll'd in endleſs fame,
Conſcious of worth ſuperior, C-BB-R came.

WHEN poor Alicia's madding brains are rack'd,
And ſtrongly imag'd griefs her mind diſtract;

Struck

Struck with her grief, I catch the madneſs too!
My brain turns round! The headleſs trunk I view!
The roof cracks, ſhakes, and falls!---New horrors riſe,
And Reaſon buried in the ruin lies.

Nobly diſdainful of each ſlaviſh art,
She makes her firſt attack upon the heart:
Pleas'd with the ſummons, it receives her laws,
And all is ſilence, ſympathy, applauſe.

But when, by fond Ambition drawn aſide,
Giddy with praiſe, and puff'd with female pride,
She quits the tragic ſcene, and, in pretence
To comic merit, breaks down Nature's fence;
I ſcarcely can believe my ears or eyes,
Or find out C-bb-r through the dark diſguiſe.

Pritchard, by Nature for the ſtage deſign'd,
In perſon graceful, and in ſenſe refin'd;
Her Art as much as Nature's friend became,
Her voice as free from blemiſh as her fame.
Who knows ſo well in majeſty to pleaſe,
Attemper'd with the graceful charms of eaſe?

When Congreve's favour'd pantomine to grace,
She comes a captive queen of Mooriſh race;

When Love, Hate, Jealouſy, Deſpair, and Rage,
With wildeſt tumults in her breaſt engage;
Still equal to herſelf is Zara ſeen:
Her paſſions are the paſſions of a queen.

When ſhe to murther whets the tim'rous Thane,
I feel ambition ruſh through ev'ry vein;
Perſuaſion hangs upon her daring tongue,
My heart grows flint, and ev'ry nerve's new ſtrung.

In comedy—"Nay, there," cries critic, "hold.
" Pritchard's for comedy too fat and old.
" Who can, with patience, bear the grey coquette,
" Or force a laugh with over-grown Julett?
" Her ſpeech, look, action, humour, all are juſt;
" But then, her age and figure give diſguſt."

Are Foibles then, and graces of the mind,
In real life, to ſize or age confin'd?
Do ſpirits flow, and is good-breeding plac'd
In any ſet circumference of waiſt?
As we grow old, doth affectation ceaſe,
Or gives not age new vigour to caprice?
If in originals theſe things appear,
Why ſhould we bar them in the copy here?

THE nice punctilio-mongers of this age,
The grand minute reformers of the ſtage,
Slaves to propriety of ev'ry kind,
Some ſtandard-meaſure for each part ſhould find;
Which, when the beſt of actors ſhall exceed,
Let it devolve to one of ſmaller breed.

ALL actors too upon the back ſhould bear
Certificate of birth;---time, when;---place, where.
For how can critics rightly fix their worth,
Unleſs they know the minute of their birth?
An audience too, deceiv'd, may find, too late,
That they have clapp'd an actor out of date.

FIGURE, I own, at firſt, may give offence,
And harſhly ſtrike the eye's too curious ſenſe:
But when perfections of the mind break forth,
Humour's chaſte ſallies, Judgment's ſolid worth;
When the pure genuine flame, by Nature taught,
Springs into Senſe, and ev'ry action's Thought;
Before ſuch merit, all objections fly;
PRITCHARD's genteel, and GARRICK ſix feet high.

OFT have I, PRITCHARD, ſeen thy wond'rous ſkill,
Confeſs'd thee great, but find thee greater ſtill.
That worth, which ſhone in ſcatter'd rays before,
Collected now, breaks forth with double pow'r.

The Jealous Wife!---On that thy trophies raiſe,
Inferior only to the Author's praiſe.

From D-bl-n, fam'd in legends of romance
For mighty magic of enchanted lance,
With which her heroes arm'd victorious prove,
And, like a flood, ruſh o'er the land of Love;
M-ss-p and B-r-y came.---Names ne'er deſign'd
By Fate in the ſame ſentence to be join'd.

Rais'd by the breath of popular acclaim,
They mounted to the pinnacle of Fame:
There the weak brain, made giddy with the height,
Spur'd on the rival chiefs to mortal fight.
Thus ſportive boys, around ſome baſon's brim,
Behold the pipe-drawn bladders circling ſwim;
But if, from lungs more potent, there ariſe
Two bubbles of a more than common ſize,
Eager for honour, they for fight prepare,
Bubble meets bubble, and both ſink to air.

M-ss-p, attach'd to military plan,
Still kept his eye fix'd on his right-hand man:
Whilſt the mouth meaſures words with ſeeming ſkill,
The right hand labours, and the left lies ſtill.
For he reſolv'd on ſcripture-grounds to go,
What the right doth, the left hand ſhall not know.

With ſtudied impropriety of ſpeech,
He ſoars beyond the hackney critic's reach;
To epithets allots emphatic ſtate,
Whilſt principals, ungrac'd, like lacquies wait;
In ways firſt trodden by himſelf excels,
And ſtands alone in indeclinables:
Conjunction, prepoſition, adverb, join
To ſtamp new vigour on the nervous line:
In monoſyllables his thunders roll,
HE, SHE, IT, AND, WE, YE, THEY, fright the ſoul.

In perſon taller than the common ſize,
Behold where B---y draws admiring eyes!
When lab'ring paſſions, in his boſom pent,
Convulſive rage, and ſtruggling heave for vent;
Spectators, with imagin'd terrors warm,
Anxious expect the burſting of the ſtorm:
But all unfit in ſuch a pile to dwell,
His voice comes forth like Echo from her cell;
To ſwell the tempeſt needful aid denies,
And all adown the ſtage in feeble murmurs dies.

What man, like B---y, with ſuch pains can err
In elocution, action, character?
What man could give, if B---y was not here,
Such well-applauded tenderneſs to Lear?

Who elſe can ſpeak ſo very, very fine,
That Senſe may kindly end with ev'ry line?

Some dozen lines before the ghoſt is there,
Behold him for the ſolemn ſcene prepare.
See how he frames his eyes, poiſes each limb,
Puts the whole body into proper trim,---
From whence we learn, with no great ſtretch of art,
Five lines hence comes a ghoſt, and, ha! a ſtart.

When he appears moſt perfect, ſtill we find
Something which jars upon, and hurts the mind.
Whatever lights upon a part are thrown,
We ſee too plainly they are not his own.
No flame from Nature ever yet he caught,
Nor knew a feeling which he was not taught:
He rais'd his trophies on the baſe of art,
And conn'd his paſſions as he conn'd his part.

Q--n, from afar, lur'd by the ſcent of fame,
A Stage-Leviathan, put in his claim.
Pupil of Betterton and Booth. Alone,
Sullen he walk'd, and deem'd the chair his own.
For how ſhould moderns, muſhrooms of the day,
Who ne'er thoſe maſters knew, know how to play?

GRAY-BEARDED vet'rans, who, with partial tongue,
Extol the times when they themſelves were young;
Who, having loſt all reliſh for the ſtage,
See not their own defects, but laſh the age,
Receiv'd, with joyful murmurs of applauſe,
Their darling chief, and lin'd his fav'rite cauſe.

FAR be it from the candid Muſe to tread
Inſulting o'er the aſhes of the dead.
But juſt to living merit, ſhe maintains,
And dares the teſt, whilſt GARRICK's Genius reigns;
Ancients, in vain, endeavour to excel,
Happily prais'd if they could act as well.

BUT, though Preſcription's force we diſallow,
Nor to Antiquity ſubmiſſive bow;
Though we deny imaginary grace,
Founded on accidents of time and place;
Yet real worth of ev'ry growth ſhall bear
Due praiſe, nor muſt we, Q--N, forget thee there.

HIS words bore ſterling weight, nervous and ſtrong,
In manly tides of ſenſe they roll'd along.
Happy in art, he chiefly had pretence
To keep up Numbers, yet not forfeit Senſe,

No actor ever greater heights could reach
In all the labour'd artifice of ſpeech.

Speech! Is that all? And ſhall an actor found,
An univerſal fame on partial ground?
Parrots themſelves ſpeak properly by rote,
And, in ſix months, my dog ſhall howl by note.
I laugh at thoſe who, when the ſtage they tread,
Neglect the heart to compliment the head;
With ſtrict propriety their care's confin'd
To weigh out words, while Paſſion halts behind.
To Syllable-diſſectors they appeal,
Allow them accent, cadence,---Fools may feel;
But, ſpite of all the criticiſing elves,
Thoſe who would make us feel, muſt feel themſelves.

His eyes, in gloomy ſocket taught to roll,
Proclaim'd the ſullen habit of his ſoul.
Heavy and phlegmatic he trod the ſtage,
Too proud for tenderneſs, too dull for rage.

When Hector's lovely widow ſhines in tears,
Or Rowe's gay Rake dependant Virtue jeers;
With the ſame caſt of features he is ſeen
To chide the Libertine, and court the Queen.

From the tame ſcene which without paſſion flows,
With juſt deſert his reputation roſe.
Nor leſs he pleas'd, when, on ſome ſurly plan,
He was, at once, the Actor and the Man.

In Brute he ſhone unequall'd: all agree
Garrick's not half ſo great a Brute as he.
When Cato's labour'd ſcenes are brought to view,
With equal praiſe the Actor labour'd too.
For ſtill you'll find, trace paſſions to their root,
Small diff'rence 'twixt the Stoic and the Brute.

In fancied ſcenes, as in life's real plan,
He could not, for a moment, ſink the Man.
In whate'er caſt his character was laid,
Self ſtill, like oil, upon the ſurface play'd.
Nature, in ſpite of all his ſkill, crept in:
Horatio, Dorax, Falſtaff,---ſtill 'twas Q--n.

Next follows Sh-r-d-n.---A doubtful name,
As yet unſettled in the rank of Fame.
This, fondly laviſh in his praiſes grown,
Gives him all merit; That, allows him none.
Between them both, we'll ſteer the middle courſe,
Nor, loving Praiſe, rob Judgment of her force.

Just his conceptions, natural and great:
His feelings ſtrong, his words enforc'd with weight.
Was ſpeech-fam'd Q--n himſelf to hear him ſpeak,
Envy would drive the colour from his cheek:
But ſtep-dame Nature, niggard of her grace,
Deny'd the ſocial pow'rs of voice and face.

Fix'd in one frame of features, glare of eye,
Paſſions, like Chaos, in confuſion lie:
In vain the wonders of his ſkill are try'd
To form Diſtinction Nature hath deny'd.

His voice no touch of harmony admits,
Irregularly deep and ſhrill by fits:
The two extremes appear, like man and wife,
Coupled together for the ſake of ſtrife.

His Action's always ſtrong, but ſometimes ſuch
That Candour muſt declare, he acts too much.
Why muſt Impatience fall three paces back?
Why paces three return to the attack?
Why is the right leg too forbid to ſtir,
Unleſs in motion ſemicircular?
Why muſt the Heroe with the Nailor vie,
And hurl the cloſe-clench'd fiſt at noſe or eye?

In Royal John, with Philip angry grown,
I thought he would have knock'd poor D-v-s down.
Inhuman tyrant! was it not a ſhame
To fright a king ſo harmleſs and ſo tame?

But, ſpight of all defects, his glories riſe;
And Art, by Judgment form'd, with Nature vies.
Behold him ſound the depth of Hubert's ſoul,
Whilſt in his own contending paſſions roll.
View the whole ſcene, with critic judgment ſcan,
And then---deny him Merit if you can.
Where he falls ſhort, 'tis Nature's fault alone;
Where he ſucceeds, the Merit's all his own.

Last, Garrick came.---Behind him throng a train
Of ſnarling critics, ignorant as vain.

One finds out,--"He's of ſtature ſomewhat low,---
"Your Heroe always ſhould be tall you know.---
"True nat'ral greatneſs all conſiſts in height."---
Produce your voucher, Critic.---"Serjeant Kyte."

Another can't forgive the paltry arts
By which he makes his way to ſhallow hearts;
Mere pieces of fineſſe, traps for applauſe.---
"Avant unnat'ral ſtart, affected pauſe."

For

For me, by Nature form'd to judge with phlegm,
I can't acquit by wholeſale nor condemn.
The beſt things carried to exceſs are wrong;
The ſtart may be too frequent, pauſe too long.
But only us'd in proper time and place,
Severeſt judgment muſt allow them Grace.

If Bunglers, form'd on Imitation's plan,
Juſt in the way that Monkies mimic Man;
Their copied ſcene with mangled arts diſgrace,
And pauſe and ſtart with the ſame vacant face;
We join the critic laugh; thoſe tricks we ſcorn,
Which ſpoil the ſcenes they mean them to adorn.

But when, from Nature's pure and genuine ſource,
Theſe ſtrokes of acting flow with gen'rous force;
When in the features all the ſoul's portray'd,
And paſſions, ſuch as Garrick's, are diſplay'd;
To me they ſeem from quickeſt feelings caught:
Each ſtart, is Nature; and each pauſe, is Thought.

When Reaſon yields to Paſſion's wild alarms,
And the whole ſtate of Man is up in arms;
What, but a Critic, could condemn the Play'r
For pauſing here, when Cool Senſe pauſes there?
Whilſt, working from the heart, the fire I trace,
And mark it ſtrongly flaming to the face;

Whilſt, in each ſound, I hear the very man;
I can't catch words, and pity thoſe who can.

Let Wits, like Spiders, from the tortur'd brain
Fine-draw the critic-web with curious pain;
The Gods,---a kindneſs I with thanks muſt pay,---
Have form'd me of a coarſer kind of clay;
Nor ſtung with Envy, nor with Spleen diſeas'd,
A poor dull creature, ſtill with Nature pleas'd;
Hence to thy praiſes, Garrick, I agree,
And, pleas'd with Nature, muſt be pleas'd with Thee.

Now might I tell how ſilence reign'd throughout,
And deep attention huſh'd the rabble rout;
How ev'ry claimant, tortur'd with deſire,
Was pale as aſhes, or as red as fire:
But, looſe to Fame, the Muſe more ſimply acts,
Rejects all flouriſh, and relates mere facts.

The judges, as the ſev'ral parties came,
With Temper heard, with Judgment weigh'd each claim,
And in their ſentence happily agreed,
In name of both, Great Shakespear thus decreed:

" If Manly Senſe; if Nature, link'd with Art;
" If thorough Knowledge of the Human Heart;
" If Pow'rs of Acting, vaſt and unconfin'd;
" If feweſt Faults, with greateſt Beauties join'd;
" If ſtrong Expreſſion, and ſtrange Pow'rs, which lie
" Within the magic circle of the eye;
" If Feelings which few hearts, like His, can know,
" And which no Face ſo well as His can ſhew;
" Deſerve the Pref'rence;---GARRICK take the Chair;
" Nor quit it---'till Thou place an Equal There.

*FINIS.*